

IN THE CLAIMS

The listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A process for the treatment of wood including: placing the wood to be treated in a treatment vessel and applying a vacuum; exposing the wood to a treatment solution while substantially maintaining said vacuum; applying a predetermined pressure to the wood for a period of time sufficient to partially impregnate the wood with the treatment solution; reducing the pressure within the treatment vessel and concurrently emptying the treatment vessel of treatment solution; whereby immediately after said reduction of pressure within the treatment vessel, the partially impregnated wood includes an unimpregnated inner zone which has a residual vacuum ~~elevating~~ alleviating seepage of treatment solution from the partially impregnated wood.

2. (Original) The process of Claim 1, wherein the wood to be treated is dried wood, partially dried wood or green wood.

3. (Original) The process of Claim 1, wherein the wood to be treated is steam conditioned wood or microwave heated or heated wood.

4. (Original) The process of Claim 1, wherein the vacuum applied to the wood is between -55 to -90 kPa (gauge).

5. (Original) The process of Claim 1, wherein the vacuum is applied to the wood for up to approximately 45 minutes.

6. (Original) The process of Claim 1, wherein the time for introduction of treatment solution into the treatment vessel is no longer than 30 seconds.

7. (Original) The process of Claim 5, wherein the time for introduction of the treatment solution into the treatment vessel is from 3-10 seconds.